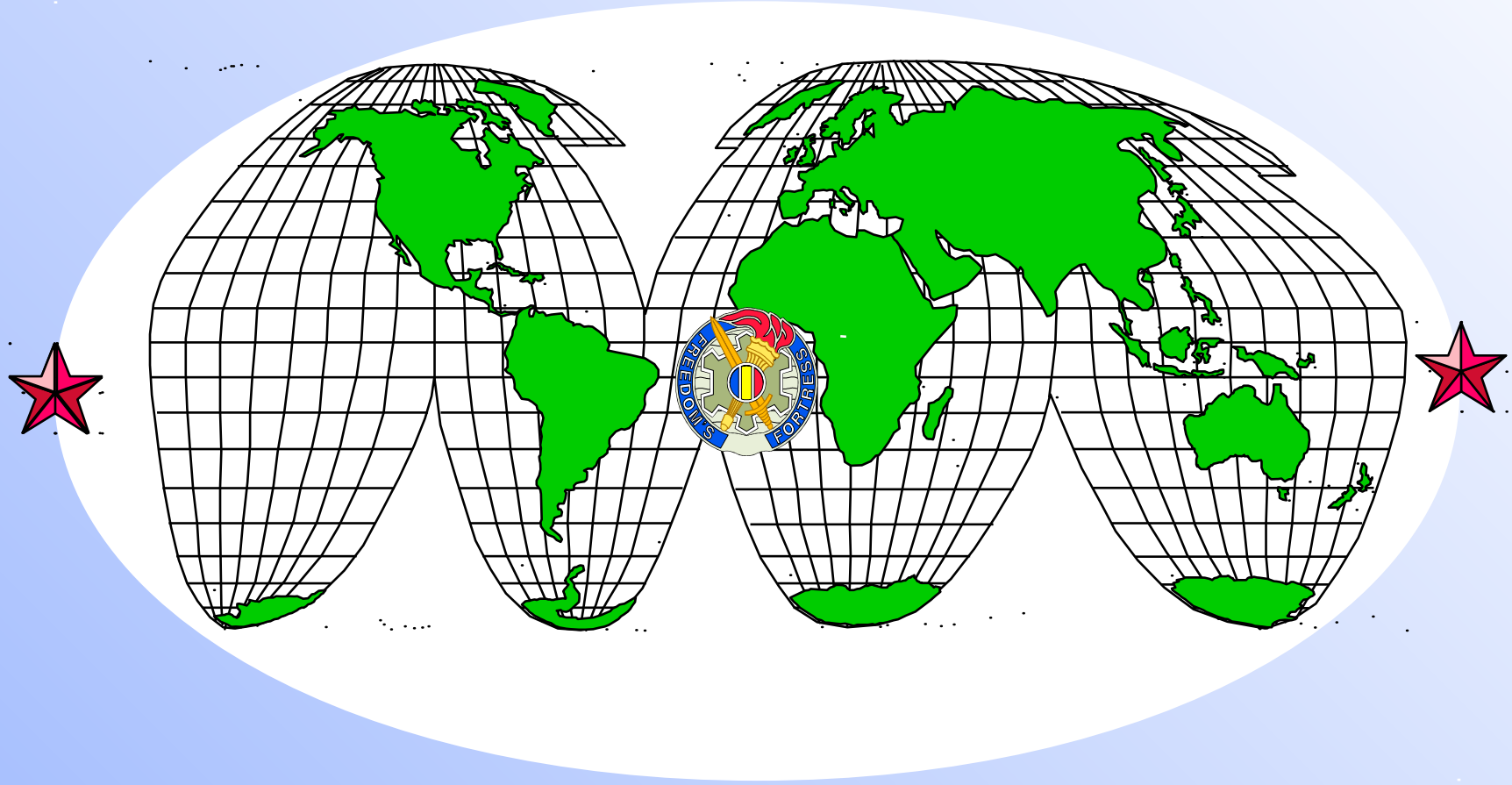
# Threat Support Directorat




# TRADOC DCSINT

# THREATS IN THE CONTEMPORARY OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

# OBJECTIVES

- **Describe the contemporary operational environment (COE).**

- **Describe the kinds of threats the US Army may face in the COE.**

# OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

**A composite of all the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of military forces and bear on the decisions of the unit commander.**

**IN SHORT: The factors and variables that affect where soldiers will live, work, and fight.**

# THREAT

**Any specific foreign nation or organization with intentions and military capabilities that suggest it could be adversarial or challenge the security interests of the United States, its friends, or allies.**

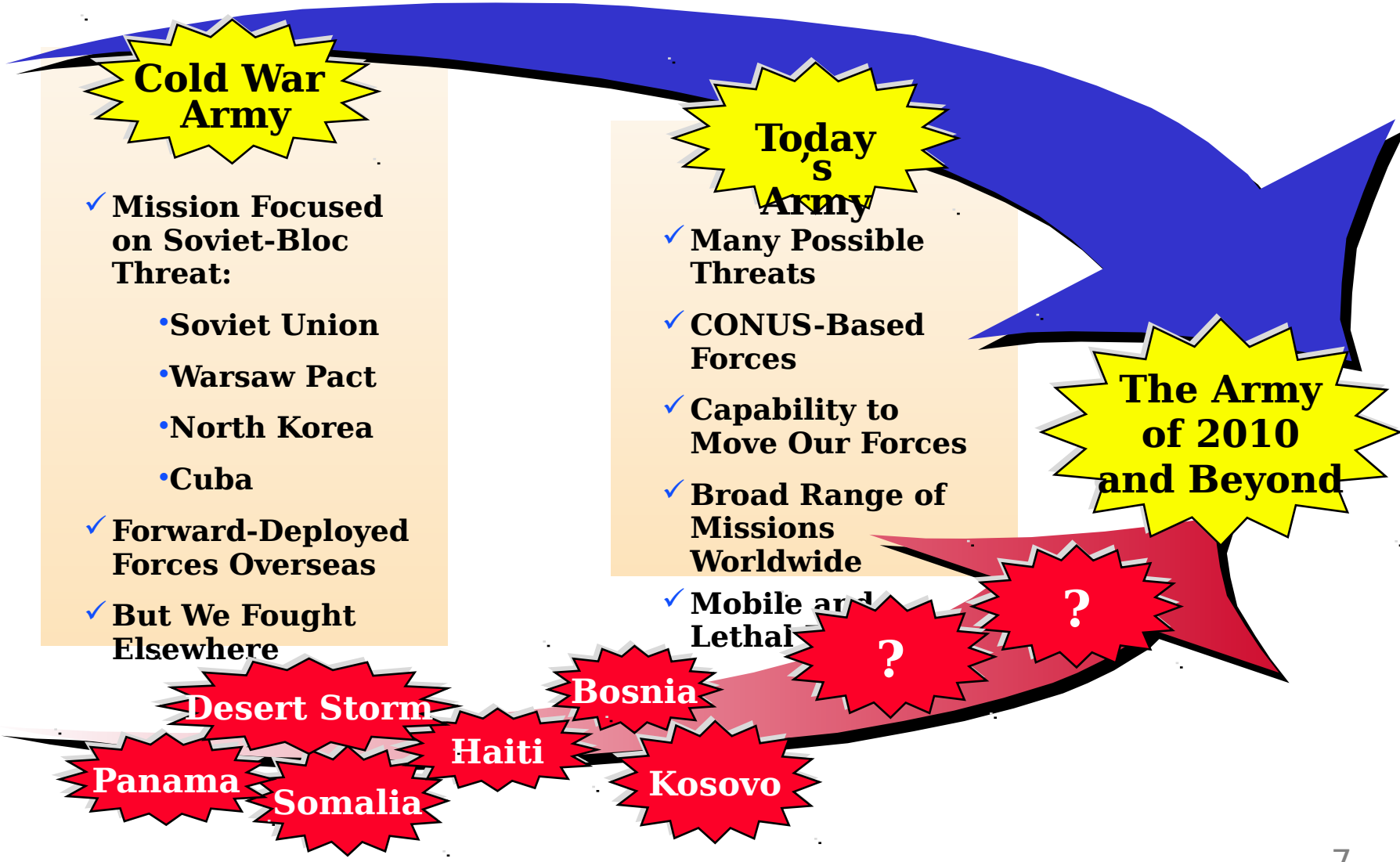
**IN SHORT: A potential adversary to the United States.**

# COLD WAR
# OPPOSING FORCE (OPFOR)

**An organized force created by and from U.S. army units to portray a unit of a potential adversary armed force.**

**AR 350-2 (1976)**

# HOW THE ARMY HAS EVOLVED



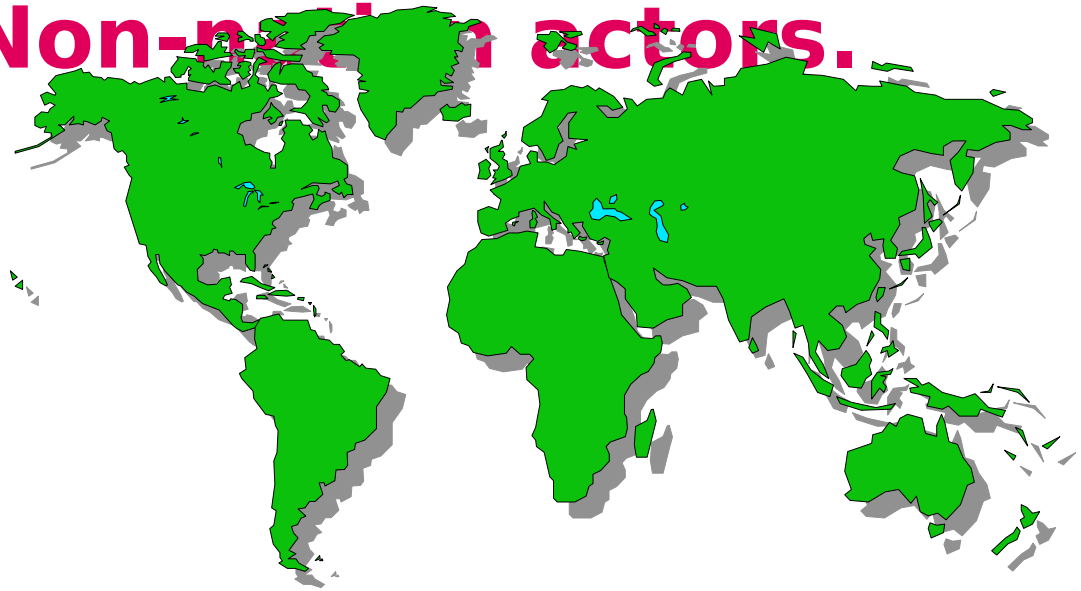
# CONTEMPORARY OPPOSING FORCE (OPFOR)

A **plausible**, **flexible** military and/or nonmilitary force representing a **composite** of varying **capabilities** of actual worldwide forces, used in lieu of a specific threat force, for training and developing US forces.

# STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

# ACTORS

- **Who are the actors (participants)?**
  - **Nation-states (countries).**
  - **Non-nation actors.**



# NATION-STATE ACTORS

- Core states (major powers).
- Transition states (want-to-be).
- Rogue states (hostile).
- Failed or failing states (instability).
- Countries can switch categories.
- Multinational alliances and coalitions.

# NON-NATION ACTORS

- **Rogue actors:**

  - **Terrorist.**
  - **Drug-trafficking.**
  - **Criminal.**

# NON-NATION ACTORS (Cont)

- **Third-party actors:**
  - **Civilians on the battlefield.**
  - **International humanitarian relief organizations.**

C.A.R.E.

# NON-NATION ACTORS (Cont)

- **Media agencies.**
  - **Information.**
  - **Manipulation.**

- **Multinational corporations:**
  - **Help transition states build infrastructure.**
  - **Influence regional affairs for economic gain.**
  - **Concern about collateral damage.**
  - **Armed security forces**

# FOREIGN VIEWS OF THE US

- **Major power with overall technological advantage.**
- **Avoid direct fighting and rely on air campaign and standoff technology.**
- **Depend on high technology.**
- **Depend on information dominance.**

# FOREIGN VIEWS OF THE US (Cont)

- **Unwilling to accept heavy losses.**
- **Sensitive to domesti and world opinion.**
- **Lack of commitment over time.**
- **Lack of cultural awareness.**

- **Conduct predictable military operations.**

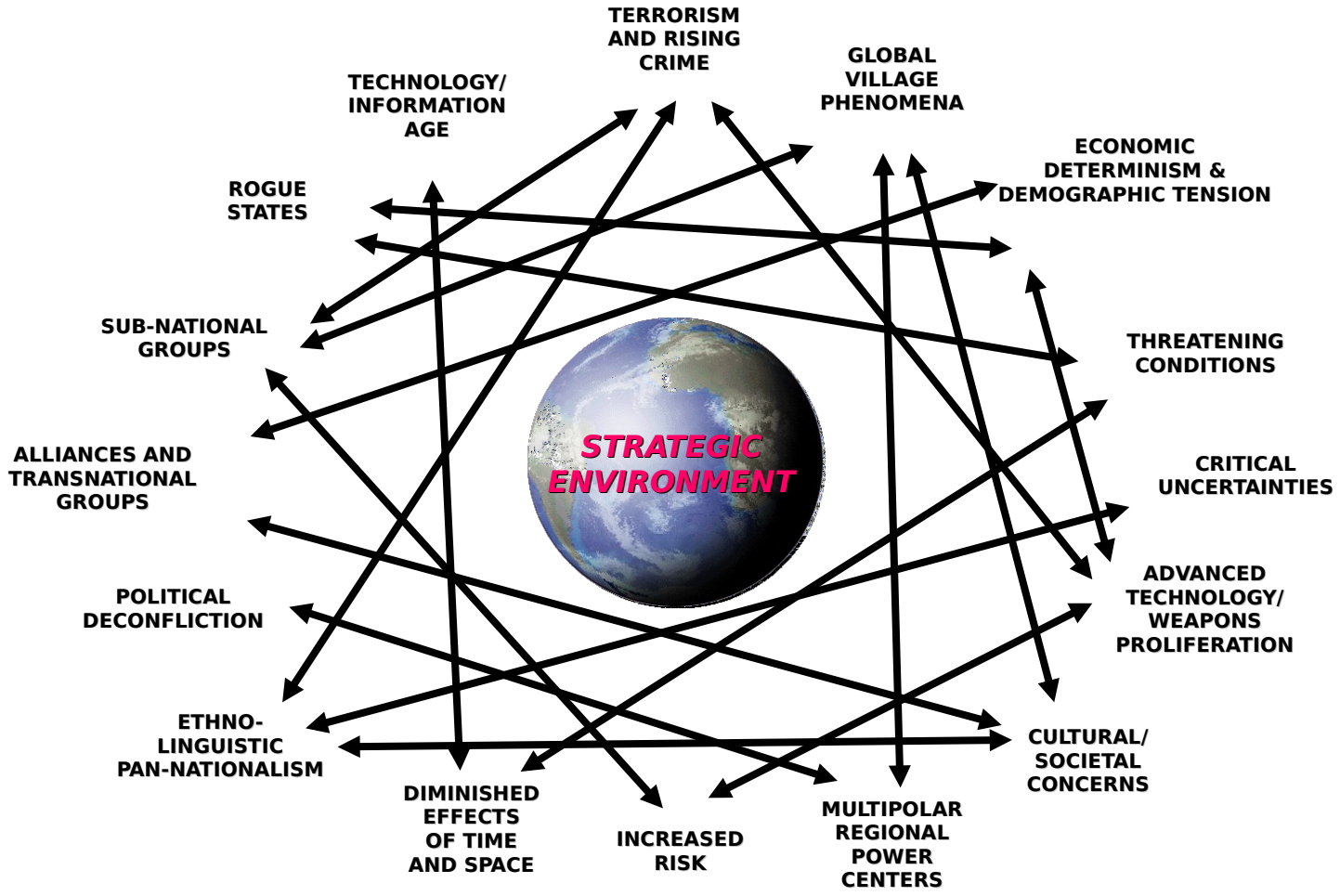
# FOREIGN VIEWS OF THE US (Cont)

- **Vulnerability of coalitions.**
- **Vulnerability of force projection.**
- **Depend on robust logistics.**
- **Rely on contractor support.**
- **Downsize after conflict**

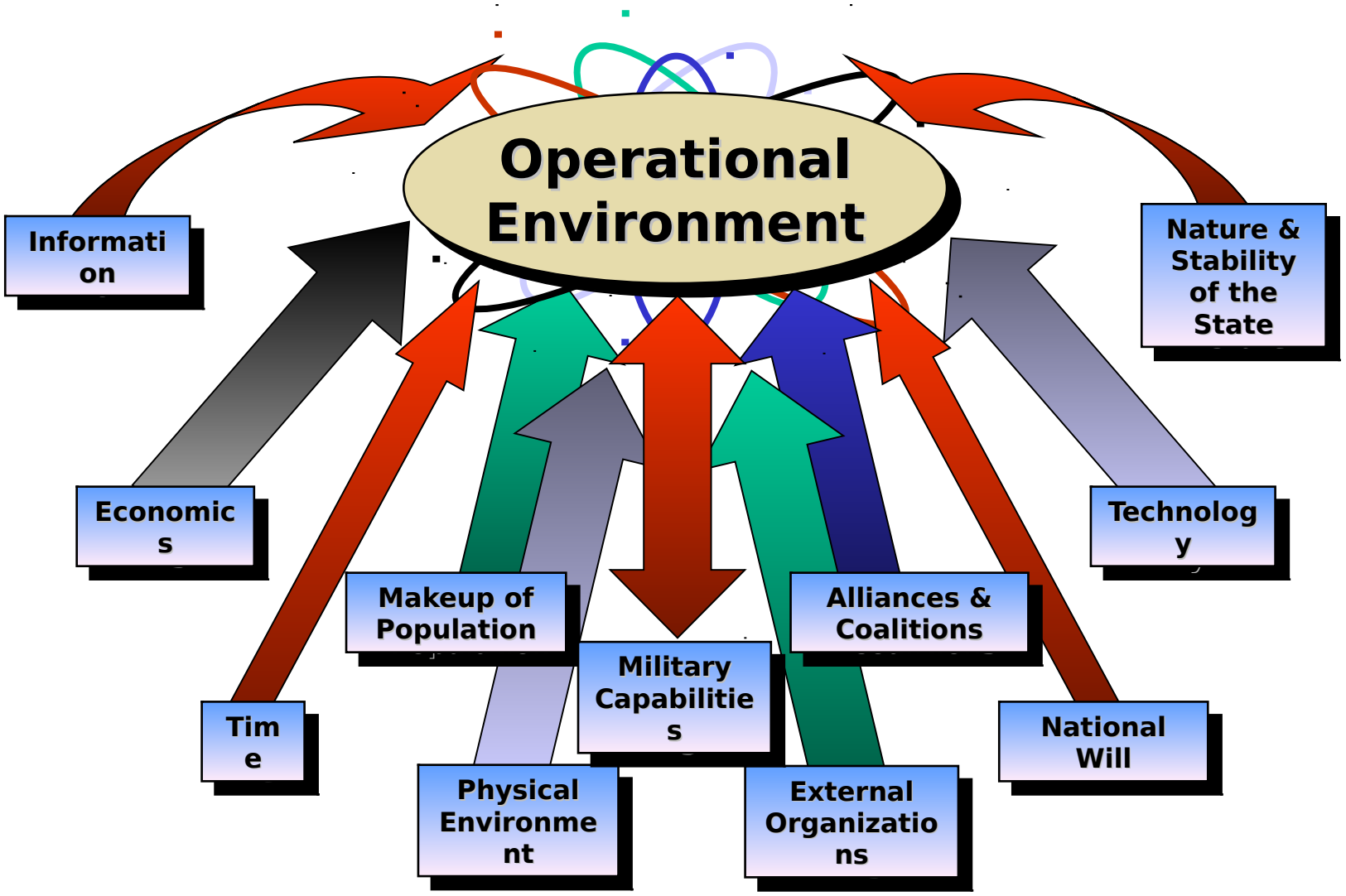
# ASYMMETRIC WARFARE

- **Avoid your opponent's strengths.**
- **Use whatever advantages you may have against his weaknesses.**
- **Our enemies are not going to fight "our kind of war."**

# STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT



# CRITICAL VARIABLES



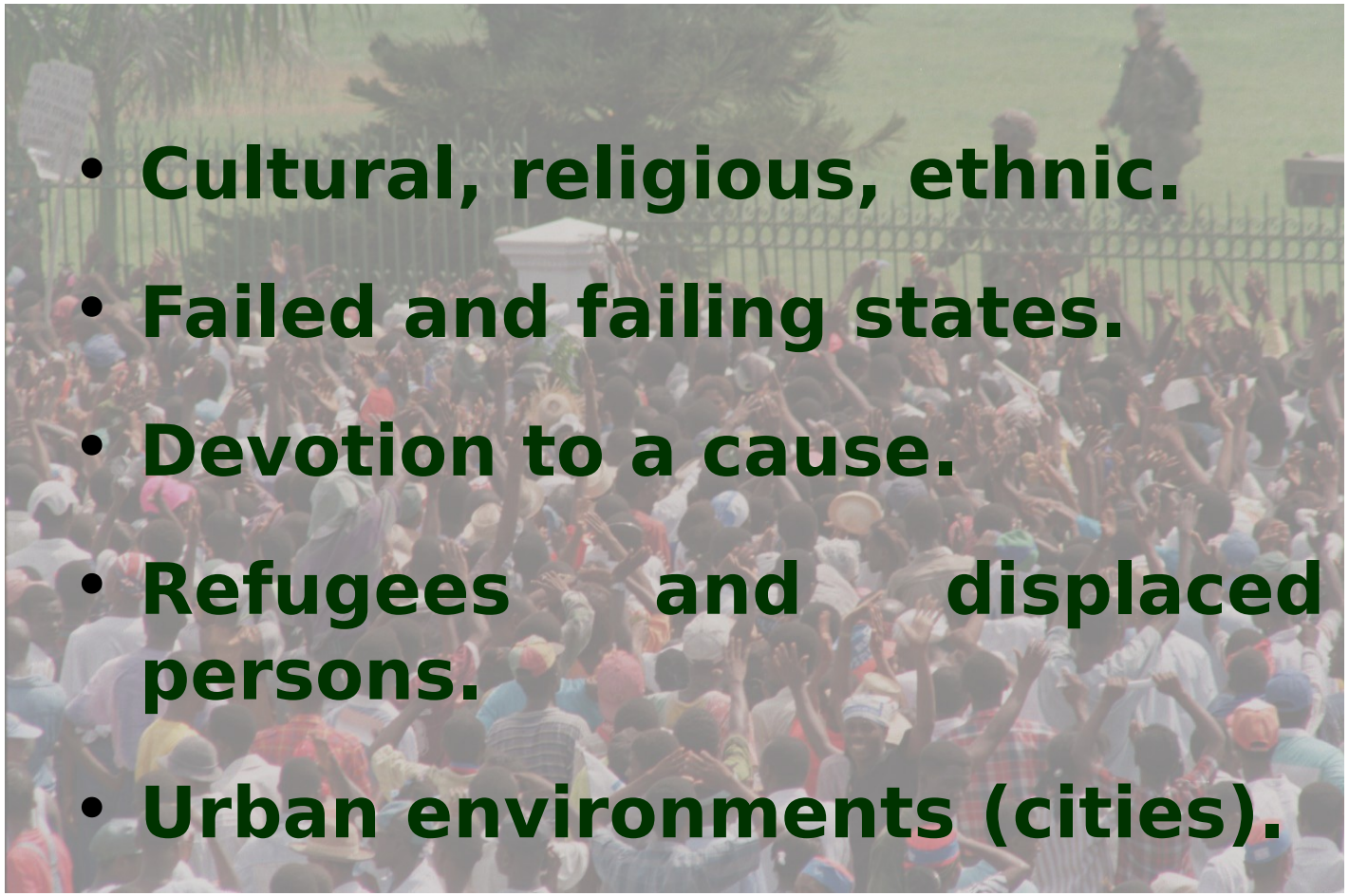
# PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- **Military forces are optimized for certain environments.**
- **Less complex and open environments favor the US.**
- **Enemies will try to use urban environments and other complex terrain to their advantage.**

# NATURE AND STABILITY OF THE STATE

- How strong or how shaky.
- Where the real strength is.
- Who is in charge.
- Nature and aims of military campaign.
- Kinds of threat present.

# MAKEUP OF POPULATION



- Cultural, religious, ethnic.
- Failed and failing states.
- Devotion to a cause.
- Refugees and displaced persons.
- Urban environments (cities).

# ALLIANCES AND COALITIONS

- **Political, economic, military, or cultural.**
- **Regional or global.**
- **Opponents can influence our coalitions.**
- **Add to military capability and broaden scale of military operations.**
- **Unpredictability.**
- **Nonaligned states.**

# MILITARY CAPABILITIES

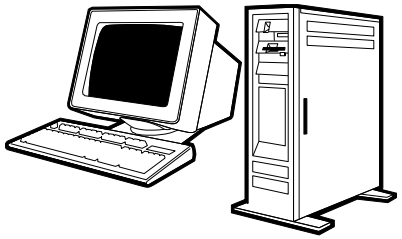
- **The most critical and most complex factor.**
- **Foreign views:**
  - **US has overall technological advantage.**
  - **Others use this as guide to optimizing their own capabilities and negating ours.**
- **Conventional against local or regional actors.**
- **Adaptive (asymmetric) when US becomes involved.**

# MILITARY CAPABILITIES (Cont)

- **Conventional:**
  - **US has significant advantage.**
  - **Head-to-head fight unlikely until they develop …**
  - **High-end forces may have equality or temporary superiority.**
- **Adaptive (Asymmetric):**
  - **Exploit US weaknesses.**
  - **Technological surprise.**
  - **Deliberate or opportunity-driven.**

# INFORMATION

- **Information-based society and information technology.**
  - **Computers.**
  - **Other information systems.**
- **Information warfare.**
  - **Information systems attack.**
  - **Psychological warfare.**
  - **Deception.**



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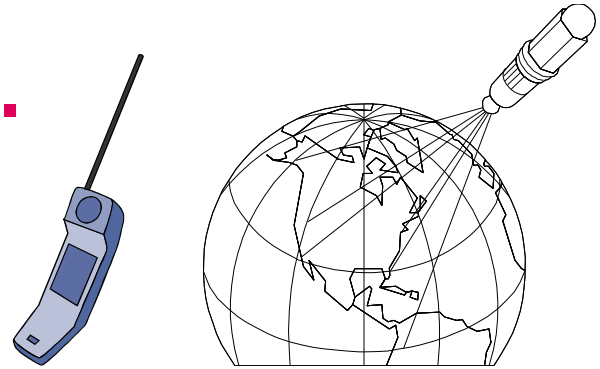
# INFORMATION (Cont)

- **Media and global information flow.**
  - **Transparency (access to data).**
  - **Sway public and political opinion.**
- **Situational awareness.**
  - **Home field advantage.**
  - **Commercial systems.**
  - **Human networks.**



# TECHNOLOGY

- **Symmetric capabilities.**
  - **Level the playing field.**
  - **A few systems that**

# TECHNOLOGY (Cont)

- **Asymmetric counters to our high-tech systems.**
  - **Less advanced systems in complex/urban settings.**
  - **Selected niche areas.**
  - **Low-cost, high-payoff new technologies.**
  - **Upgrades and hybrids.**
  - **Precision munitions.**
- **Technological surprise.**

# EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

- **International humanitarian assistance.**
  - **Manmade and natural disasters.**
  - **Disease, hunger, and poverty**

# EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS (Cont)

- **Growing in influence and power.**
- **Willingness to become involved in crisis situations.**
- **Stated and hidden interests/objectives.**
  - **Favorable to US and provide assistance.**
  - **Adverse to US or create conflict.**
  - **Make mistakes.**

# NATIONAL WILL

- **People, government, and military.**
- **Objectives and duration of a conflict.**
- **Victory often depends on will.**
- **Attack the opponent's national will and try to preserve your own.**
- **US national will as a vulnerability—a strategic center of gravity.**

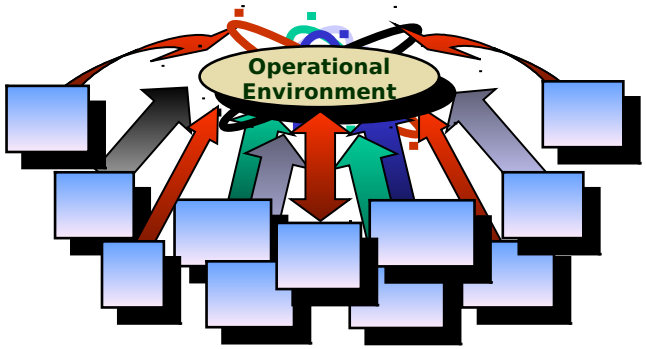
# TIME

- **Time drives decision making and operations.**
- **Opponents see time as being in their advantage.**
  - **Adjust the nature of the conflict.**
  - **Control US entry.**
  - **Dictate the tempo.**
  - **Outlast the US will to continue.**

# ECONOMICS

- **“Haves” and “have-nots.”**
- **Economic vs military superiority.**
- **Ability to buy military technology or to conduct prolonged operations.**
- **Regional and global relationships can result in military or political assistance.**

# OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT




- **Critical variables in operational environment.**
- **Foreign views of the United States.**
- **Military capabilities and threats.**

# THREATS

**Threat: A potential adversary to the United States.**

**Capabilities.**

- **Intentions.**

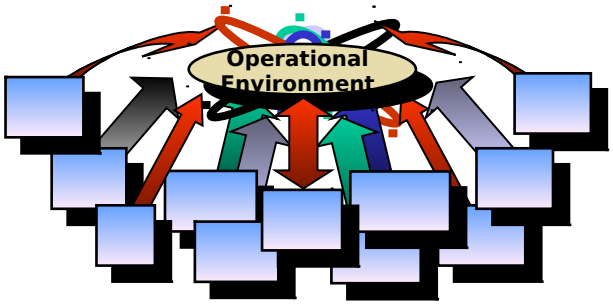
**Nation-State**

**Non-Nation**

**Adaptive (Asymmetric)**

# THREATS IN TODAY'S OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

# BOTTOM LINE




Nation-state

Non-nation

Third-party actors

Adaptive (Asymmetric)

**The U.S. Army must be prepared to—**

- **Go into any of these operational environments.**
- **Perform its full range of missions.**
- **In the face of a wide variety of possible threats.**
- **At same time, deal with third-party actors.**

# Questions?